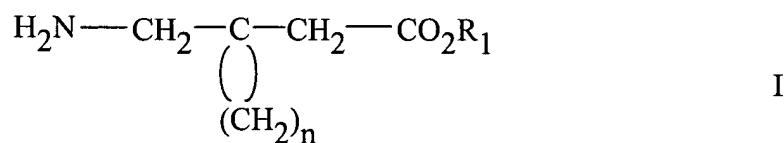


AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This amendment to the claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application.

Claim 1 (currently amended). A method of ~~preventing or treating~~ noninflammatory cartilage damage in a mammal suffering therefrom, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a GABA analog having the characteristic of being an inhibitor of cartilage damage, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 2 (currently amended). ~~The method according to Claim 1~~ A method of treating noninflammatory cartilage damage in a mammal suffering therefrom, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a GABA analog having the characteristic of being an inhibitor of cartilage damage, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein the GABA analog is a compound of Formula I



and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, wherein R₁ is hydrogen or straight or branched lower alkyl, and n is an integer of from 4 to 6.

Claim 3 (original). The method according to Claim 2, wherein the GABA analog is gabapentin.

Claims 4 to 57 (cancelled)

Claim 58 (currently amended). ~~The method according to Claim 57~~ A method of treating noninflammatory cartilage damage in a mammal suffering therefrom, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition for treating noninflammatory cartilage damage, comprising a noninflammatory cartilage damage treating effective amount of a GABA analog having the characteristic of being an inhibitor of cartilage damage, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent, or excipient, wherein the GABA analog is a compound named 3-(1-aminomethyl-cyclohexylmethyl)-4H-[1,2,4]oxadiazol-5-one, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 59 (currently amended). ~~The method according to Claim 57~~ Claim 58, wherein the GABA analog is a compound named 3-(1-aminomethyl-cyclohexylmethyl)-4H-[1,2,4]oxadiazol-5-one hydrochloride.